The IDLER

Public Occurrences, Comment, Excursions & Rational Entertainment

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Motion Without Progress

SOONER OR LATER, HOPEFULLY, the Administration will discover that it can not dig itself out of the Vietnamese mess with lies and theatrics. There are some tough choices for this country to make and they can only be made wisely in an atmosphere of candor and reason. The Administration has contributed little to such an atmosphere over the past months. If it were not for the persistence of popular protest, the well-substantiated criticisms of certain senators and congressmen, and the perceptiveness of some of the press, things would undoubtedly be even worse than they are now. The Administration has shown distressingly little judgement or skill in handling Vietnam and even the tawdry side shows it has set up have not obscured this fact.

We entered the new year in the midst of a much bruited peace offensive. Special envoys were dashed to the farthest crannies of the globe to discuss with allies, Communists and neutrals the prospects for a Vietnamese peace. Day after day, during the previous year, responsible citizens had pled with the President to pursue peace as diligently as he pursued war. And day after day the Administration responded with its hoked-up rationalizations for escalation.

Then, suddenly, Lyndon Johnson decided it was time for peace. The runners were sent out from the White House to announce this to the world. Mr. Johnson has gotten used to arranging events according to his own time schedule. It works pretty well with the Congress and elsewhere at home; but, unfortunately, the course of history of a subcontinent could not be altered in 37 days just to suit Mr. Johnson's convenience. Mr. Johnson's county courthouse political style may move congressmen and aluminum corporation presidents, but its effectiveness apparently stops at the water's edge.

The failure of the peace offensive, (a gaudy display that Dean Rusk, for some unknown reason, characterized as "quiet diplomacy") brought great public expressions of chagrin from the Administration. But it is unlikely that Mr. Johnson or any other Administration official really expected the peace offensive to work except as a result of some great stroke of luck. More probably it was designed (1) to take some of the pressure off criticism of the Administration — both domestic and foreign — that was becoming uncomfortably heated and (2) to provide an all-purpose justification for any course of action the Administration might pursue in the future. Once it was publicly established that the Communists did not want peace, escalation could be resumed at will, in any form, to any degree. The abort of the peace mission could join that grossly misused document—the Tonkin Gulf resolution — as another excuse for anything either side of disaster.

When the allotted time for the peace offensive was up; when Mr. Johnson was through with his public agonizing and his quotations from Lincoln; when just about every power had been consulted and impressed with America's steadfast desire for peace (with the curious exception of the

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Vietcong, whom — one might have thought — would have been the first to approach); we returned to the war, strengthened in our convictions and buoyed by our month of morality.

Sadly though, for an Administration so confident of the righteousness of its goals, the criticism of our policy in Vietnam refused to die down during the peace offensive.

There was continuing talk in the press about a credibility crisis, which is a nice way of saying that people think you're lying. The list of reasons for such a crisis in the case of this Administration is rather long and includes such items as the President's flat statement that we stand by the Geneva agreements (which just isn't true); the Hanoi peace feeler rhubarbs; highly questionable casualty figures, etc., etc.

Then there was the grilling Dean Rusk received from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. And the sizeable number of senators and congressmen who publicly called upon the President not to resume the bombings.

The respected voices of Generals Gavin and Ridgeway were also heard from, urging a course in Vietnam markedly different from that of the Administration.

It added up to the prospect of a most unconsensus-like storm developing if the President resumed the bombings. So it was not surprising that when the resumption was finally announced, it was coupled with the appearance of a rabbit whisked out of the LBJ Stetson. We were, it was announced, placing the Vietnam question before the Security Council of the U. N., something that had been advocated for months by many, but which the Administration had consistently refused to do.

The trip to the U.N. began, as Senator Wayne Morse put it, "two and a half years too late," and it began in typical Johnson fashion. The Monday it was announced, Ambassador Goldberg began trying to cook up a Security Council meeting for the same day, as if the inaction of months could be erased in an afternoon.

Goldberg: Sudden Rush

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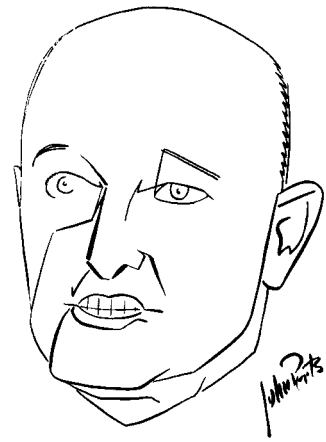
With the U.N. effort followed quickly by the Honolulu luau and the dispatch of that indefatigable optimist, Mr. Humphrey, to the heartland of pessimism, it seemed increasingly that the Administration was deluding itself with the idea that motion was an adequate substitute for progress. One searched vainly for reality to match the endless verbiage of the Administration, for goals that matched our enormous commitment, for a strategy that matched our immense tactical deployment. We were in Vietnam, it appeared, without really knowing why and we were moving rapidly without knowing where.

LBJ: Like a Golden Glover

Mr. Johnson seemed at times to be punching as wildly as a neophyte Golden Glover who had forgotten all his training the moment the bell rang. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee, George Kennan, and the press could cry out warnings from the corner. But Mr. Johnson was struggling in the ring alone, struggling too hard —it appeared—to discern the voices of reason in the roar of the crowd. *(s.s.)*



Kennan: Cries from the Corner

The Day the Buses Ran Empty

MONDAY, JANUARY 24TH, was the day that Washington thumbed it nose at O. Roy Chalk.

There is a long list of grievances against Mr. Chalk a Washingtonian could compile, but it is enough here to mention that Mr. Chalk is head of the D. C. Transit System and that Mr. Chalk, on the day in question, was in the midst of petitioning the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Commission for a fare increase from twenty-five cents to thirty cents.

On the morning of the 24th, about 7 a.m., my alarm went off, but I didn't hear it. About twenty minutes to eight I awoke and remembered the promise I had made to myself to take part in the bus boycott that day. I don't like demonstrating, probably for the same reason I don't like ringing door-bells during a campaign, being on committees, or attending civic meetings. The theory of democracy, I concluded long ago, is fine; the practice of it is often a pain in the neck.

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Still, thirty cents is a lot of money to pay for a bus ride. It's more than most public transit riders in the country pay. John Lindsay had only recently emerged from a bruising fight with New York transit workers; one of the major issues had been maintenance of a fifteen cent fare.

It seemed to many Washingtonians that Mr. Chalk and his company were making enough money already and that, in any event, thirty cents was too much to demand of thousands who rely upon bus transportation for the simple reason that there is nothing cheaper.

So I hauled myself out of bed, swallowed a cup of coffee, warmed up my '54 Chrysler, and made my way to 6th and H Sts. NE, one of the assembly points established for volunteer drivers providing free car rides during the boycott. There a boycott organizer filled my car with three high school girls and a middle aged and rather fat lady.

A bus drove by and it was empty.

"They're all empty," the lady said. It was the first bus I had seen that morning and I wondered whether she was right.

As we drove west a long H. St., I asked one of the students, "Has there been a lot of talk about the boycott at your school?"

"Oh yeah, we've been hearing about it on us teenager's favorite radio station."

"WOL?" WOL is a popular Negro station.

"Yeah man, soul radio."

A bus passed us with two passengers in it.

"That's why I've got my transistor," the fat lady said, and she showed me the portable radio she grasped under a purse and a shopping bag with a green floral design on it. The radio stations, particularly the Negro ones, were playing up the boycott. This was important since the daily papers had not been overly generous with their coverage.

If both the fat lady and her husband worked, the five cent proposed fare increase would cost them twenty cents a day. That's the price of a loaf of bread. Over the course of the year it would probably cost them as much as they spent in groceries during a month. Nickels add up.

I let off my passengers and headed back to 6th & H. At Florida & New York, I counted five empty or near-empty buses. It wasn't even nine o'clock in the morning and the boycott was working. With the type of metabolism I've got, it's pretty damn hard for me to feel exhilerated about anything before nine o'clock in the morning. But when I saw those five empty buses it was different. Washington was no longer taking it lying down. The people were being heard from. The city was coming alive. Today it was talking back to O. Roy Chalk. Tomorrow: perhaps the Board of Trade and its opposition to home rule, or slum landlords and their rat-infested basement apartments.

The boycott had been organized by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, with the help of numerous other civic action organizations including the Coalition of Conscience, a respectable group of mild hell-raisers under the impeccable leadership of a white Episcopal bishop and a Negro minister.

SNCC and the other groups charged that the fare hike was discriminatory since it would largely hurt Negro Washington. They scheduled the boycott primarily against nine heavily travelled routes in the mostly Negro northeast section of town. But they also called for city-wide walkout against D. C. Transit.

Washington is a city of considerable apathy in local matters. It has been so long denied home rule that it tends not to believe that the voice of the people matters. It often accepts its fate with a passivity that would surprise more politically conscious communities. When demonstrations and protests are organized, the police are likely to outnumber the demonstrators.

Against this background, SNCC's plan seemed audacious. It was hard enough to get 100 Washingtonians

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HUGH HAYNIE ...

"Pack Up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit
Bag and Smile! Smile! Smile!"

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organized. SNCC was trying to mobilize tens of thousands.

SNCC proposed that people walk, hitch a ride, or stay home on the day of the boycott. High school students were urged to organize walk-ins. Cars and volunteer drivers were sought to pick up riders along the boycotted bus lines. Domestics were asked to tell their employers that they would have to be picked up.

SNCC set up a communications headquarters, procured radio equipped cars, and established car assembly points. Handbills were widely distributed, stuck under doors and beneath the windshield wipers of parked cars. The police stationed additional men along the boycott routes.

"It's beautiful," the man in the slightly frayed brown overcoat said after he told me he was headed for 17th St. NW. "It's working and it's beautiful. Hey, you see those two there? Let's try and get them."

I pulled over to the right lane by a stop where two men stood.

"Hey man, why spend thirty cents? Get in," my rider called to the pair.

"You headed down town?"

"Yeah, get in."

"Great. It's working, huh? Great!"

The boycott was like an informal game of touch football on a Saturday afternoon. Nobody was too good at the game but everyone who played seemed to enjoy it just the same.

Not everyone played. As I made my way back from downtown, I stopped at several bus stops. "Fight the fare increase; ride for free," I'd call out. Most of those waiting for the bus were white. Some pretended they didn't hear me and looked the other way. Others stared as if I were a little crazy. Still others shook their head in that nervous, embarrassed way people do when they're refusing to buy pencils from a crippled man on the street corner. During the day I carried 71 people. Only five of them were white. Three American University students. One man on his way to a job interview in a crummy section of town. And one lady who thought the boycott wasn't going far enough.

I wondered about those who rejected my offer of a free ride. Perhaps they wanted a thirty cent fare. But I doubted that. It was more likely they were apprehensive about anything that upset the routine of life. They were more prosperous than the riders I picked up on Benning Rd.; more successful than the cement-caked laborer who got in on Florida Avenue; and had more reason to be satisfied with life than the Negro maid I carried who commuted regularly halfway across town to a badly paid job. But when someone offered them a free ride they were afraid: better not, he might rape me; what's the gimmick? must be one of those agitators; hitching rides is dangerous . . .

I was glad to get back to Northeast Washington, where people were helping each other out that Monday without apprehension. Life hadn't done as well by them, not by a damn sight, but at least they were not afraid of its novelties. It's too bad people get scared when they start to succeed.

At the delicatessen at 24th and Benning, one of the assembly points, a young, wavy-haired Negro who worked with SNCC greeted me. "Been waiting all morning for a car to work from here; said they were going to have one, but they didn't send it. Want a cup of coffee?"

"Thanks."

"I'm tired, man. Been up all night down at the office. We got some threats. One bunch said they were going to bomb us, but they didn't."

The SNCC worker went to the pay phone and tried to reach the SNCC office. He couldn't. "Let's go out to 34th and Benning."

We got into my car and continued east out to Benning. Lots of empty buses. "We got to live together, man. You're white and you can't help it. I'm Negro and I can't help it. But we still can get along. That's the way I feel about it."

I agreed.

"You ever worked with SNCC before?"

"Well, I'll tell you, man, you hear

"Nope."

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a lot of things. But they're a good group. They stick together. You know like if you get in trouble you know they're going to be in there with you. If you get threatened they'll have people around you all the time. They stick together. That's good, man."

People were sticking together well that Monday. SNCC estimated D. C. Transit lost 130,000 to 150,000 fares during the boycott. Only occasionally did the enthusiasm for the boycott threaten to get out of hand. One lady said she had heard that kids at her boy's school were going to wait at the bus stops and beat up any of their schoolmates who got off D. C. Transit vehicles. But there were no reports of this actually happening. More probably, it was just talk. Like the lady in my car who asked a man we had picked up at a downtown bus stop, "You weren't waiting for a bus, were you?"

"No, I just figured someone would come along and pick me up."

"That's good. 'Cause if you were waiting for a bus I was going to bop you over the head."

We all laughed and the man reassured her again.

"You know," the lady in the back continued, "there were some of the girls at work who said they were going to ride the bus and they really made me mad. I thought I'd go get a big stick and stand at the bus stop and bop 'em one if they got on Mr. Chalk's buses. Some people just don't know how to cooperate. And you know you don't have nothing in this world until you get people together . . . Hey lookit over there, let's see if that guy's going out northeast."

He was. The car was full again and we drove to the northeast end of town together. None of us knew whether the boycott would have any effect on the fare increase. Two days later, however, the transit commission, in a unanimous decision, denied D. C. Transit the hike. The commission's executive director drily told reporters that the boycott played no part in the decision. He was probably right. The commission worried about such things as cash dividends, investor's equity, rate of return, depreciated value, company rate base. The boycotters worried about a nickel more a ride. Fortunately, it all came out the same. But in case it hadn't the boycott organizers were preparing to renew the protest. It would have been interesting.

There is plenty more to protest in Washington. SNCC is already planning a boycott of selected members of the Board of Trade, Washington's Chamber of Commerce, because of the board's opposition to home rule. And the passivity of the city's citizens can no longer be taken for granted. O. Roy Chalk deserves at least some thanks for that. *(s.s.)*

☞THE PRACTICING LBJ and the preaching LBJ are having a hard time getting together, as a front page story in the *New York Times* indicated the other day: "President Johnson told Congress today that the appalling conditions of the underdeveloped half of the world 'challenge our own security and threaten the future of the world.' He then requested the smallest appropriations for improving them in the 18-year history of foreign aid programs."

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The State of the Union Address

An Annotated Abridged Edition With Complete Explanations of the More Difficult Portions

Edited by WILLARD R. FINORKLE, Ph.D.

Editor's Preface

When THE IDLER *approached me concerning the possibility of preparing this work, I feared that I was not up to the task. No adequate assessment of the Johnsonian style had ever been attempted before (unless one includes —as one shouldn't—Cobush's minor effort in the March 1964 issue of the* SOUTHWEST TEXAS A&M QUARTERLY*). Yet the challenge was an appealing one.*

Lyndon Johnson himself has often complained of the press's frequent misinterpretation of his words, as has Bill D. Moyers, Johnson's Boswell. I therefore felt it incumbent upon me to accept THE IDLER*'s request that I attempt to capture the sweep and grandeur of the presidential tongue in a major analytical treatise. Perhaps my humble but well-received precursor of this work, "Eisenhower Parsed and Unraveled," will be recalled by a few readers. I have followed the same style here, leaving out portions that have little or no scholarly interest and concentrating on those passages that cause the brain to boggle.*

The Johnsonian dialect with its peculiar phoneme construction and semantic fluctuation makes it imperative for the scholar to unloose carefully the warp and woof of the language until the ultimate threadbareness of its meaning becomes clear. Thus the thrill to this writer when he came across the phrase:

"It is the genius of our Constitution that under its shelter of enduring institutions and rooted principles there is ample room for the rich fertility of American political invention."

What memories of Locke, Hobbes, Paine, and Irwin Corey do these words evoke!

To place this address, delivered January 12th, 1966, in proper perspective, it is important to note that it was preceded on television by the world premiere of Batman and by Hollywood a Go Go. Some have suggested that these two programs will outlive the President's message. To be sure, there is nothing in the address to match the dramatic poignancy of Robin's tortured cry, "Holy Ashtray!" And not once did House Speaker John McCormack wave his arms in front of the President a la style a go go. Nonetheless, I would propose that a decision as to which work should ultimately be accepted as the chef-d'oeuvre of the period would best await the judgment of time.

It is worthwhile observing that the complete advance text of the address was not made available to the press until a few minutes before the speech was actually delivered. There is strong suggestion here that the White House remained, until the end, fundamentally unsure as to the state of the union, resulting in an address that was like a tentative hypothesis blooming in a verdant field of incertitude.

Finally, I must confess that I have used a nom de plume since I do not wish to lose my current research grant from the Department of Defense.

W. R. F.
Avalon, N. J.

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Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, Members of the House and the Senate, my fellow Americans:

I come before you tonight to report on the State of the Union for the third time.[1]

Our Nation tonight is engaged in a brutal and bitter conflict in Viet-Nam. Later on I want to discuss that struggle in some detail with you. It just must be the center of our concerns.

But we will not permit those who fire upon us in Viet-Nam to win a victory over the desires and the intentions of all the American people.[2] This Nation is mighty enough, its society is healthy enough, its people are strong enough, to pursue our goals in the rest of the world while still building a Great Society here at home.[3]

And that is what I have come here to ask of you tonight.

I recommend that you provide the resources to carry forward, with full vigor, the great health and education programs that you enacted into law last year.

I recommend that we prosecute with vigor and determination our war on poverty.

I recommend that you give a new and daring direction to our foreign aid program, designed to make a maximum attack on hunger and disease and ignorance in those countries that are determined to help themselves, and to help those nations that are trying to control population growth.[4]

I recommend to you a program to rebuild completely, on a scale never before attempted, entire central and slum areas of several of our cities in America.

I recommend that you attack the wasteful and degrading poisoning of our rivers, and, as the cornerstone of this effort, clean completely entire large river basins.

I recommend that you meet the growing menace of crime in the streets by building up law enforcement and by revitalizing the entire Federal system from prevention to probation.[5]

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[1]While Oggletree points out the possible connection here between the number of times a drowning man goes down or the number of strikes a batter is permitted in the American game of baseball, I feel Johnson meant to use **third** only in the unmetaphorical, cardinal sense.

[2]Johnson's use of the phrase **all the American people** has a slight element of hyperbole about it, part of the color and warmth of his imagery. The best literal translation of the phrase would be **those American people who agreed with me last week according to this poll I've got in my pocket here.** Johnson wisely substituted the less tedious **all.**

[3]No part of Johnsonian speech causes more problems to scholars than the phrase **great society.** Most have, like Spear & Mint, assumed the word **great** means important or distinguished, of impressive quality. The contrast between this definition and the reality it describes has left researchers confounded as to why the word **great** is used at all. An edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, however, recently discovered at the bottom of Lake Travis, Texas, near the point where the Perdenales empties into the Colorado, provides the answer. The first definitions of **great** given in this work are: "1. Coarse of grain or texture. Of diet: coarse, not delicate. 2. Thick, stout, massive, bulky, big."

[4]There has been some debate in the journals as to whether population control, as advocated in this passage, includes only normal contraceptives, or whether the continued use of B-52 raids is also implied. The issue remains unresolved.

[5]This, like numerous other passages, should present no problem to those familiar with the patois of hotel banquet menus. One conversant with this style is never surprised when **capon supreme** turns out to be only a fried chicken wing.

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I recommend that you take additional steps to insure equal justice to all of our people by effectively enforcing nondiscrimination in Federal and State jury selection, by making it a serious Federal crime to obstruct public and private efforts to secure civil rights, and by outlawing discrimination in the sale and rental of housing.[6]

Because of Viet-Nam we cannot do all that we should, or all that we would like to do.[7]

We will ruthlessly attack waste and inefficiency. We will make sure that every dollar is spent with the thrift and with the commonsense which recognizes how hard the taxpayer worked in order to earn it.

We will continue to meet the needs of our people by continuing to develop the Great Society.[8]

Because our economic policies have produced rising revenues, if you approve every program that I recommend tonight, our total budget deficit will be one of the lowest in many years. It will be only $1.8 billion next year. Total spending in the administrative budget will be $112.8 billion. Revenues next year will be $111 billion.

On a cash basis—which is the way that you and I keep our family budget —the Federal budget next year will actually show a surplus. That is to say, if we include all the money that your Government will take in and all the money that your Government will spend, your Government next year will collect one-half billion dollars more than it will spend in the year 1967.[9]

There are men who cry out: We must sacrifice. Well, let us rather ask them: Who will they sacrifice? Are they going to sacrifice the children who seek the learning, or the sick who need medical care, or the families who dwell in squalor now brightened by the hope of home? Will they sacrifice opportunity for the distressed, the beauty of our land, the hope of our poor?[10]

Time may require further sacrifices. And if it does, then we will make them.

And let no one think that the unfortunate and the oppressed of this land sit stifled and alone in their hope tonight. Hundreds of their servants and their protectors sit before me tonight here in this great chamber.[11]

I can report to you tonight what you have seen for yourselves already—in every city and countryside. This Nation is flourishing.[12]

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[6]These laws will presumably be added to other civil rights measures currently unenforced by the Justice Department.

[7]Cf. "This Nation is mighty enough, its society is healthy enough, its people are strong enough, to pursue our goals in the rest of the world while still building a Great Society here at home."

[8]Meaning, if any, obscure. Cf. note 7 supra.

[9]M. Rene deFault, author of **Ou est la Plume de mon President?**, produces these interesting corroborating statistics: $112.8 billion x $11-billion ÷ $112,800,000,000 = $111-billion. Further evidence is presented by Mrs. George R. Krokrank, of Dundy, Nebr., who writes that she keeps her family budget the way the federal government keeps its and she is very confused.

[10]The record suggests that the answer to the last two questions is yes. It does not appear likely that the Johnson Administration will become any less inclined to sacrifice schools for launch pads; medical care for highways; or housing for oil depletion allowances. This species of sacrifice was identified by Kurtz in 1964 as "consensus."

[11]E. g. John Tower, George Murphy, James Eastland, J. Strom Thurmond, Karl Mundt, Charles Halleck, H. R. Gross, John Bell Williams, James Broyhill, etc. **Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?** — Juvenal. (Who will watch the watchers?)

[12]This passage is remarkably reminiscent of the style of R. M. Nixon, former Vice President and presidential candidate. Nixon, during his campaigns, habitually reported "to you tonight" generalities totally undeniable or unprovable. Many of his audience were comforted by his words so long as they did not try to comprehend his meaning.

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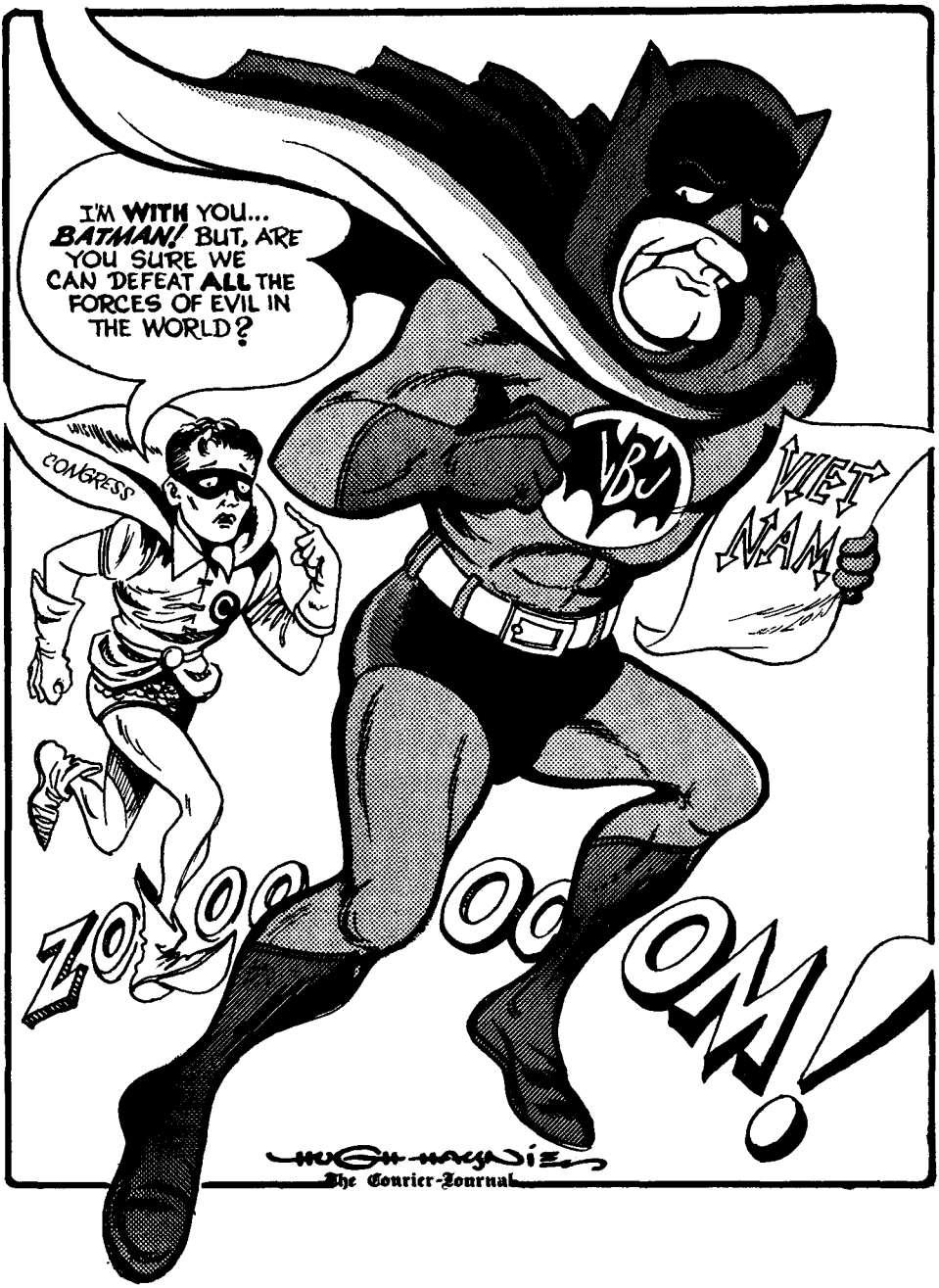
HUGH HAYNIE ...


I'M WITH YOU... BATMAN! BUT, ARE YOU SURE WE CAN DEFEAT ALL THE FORCES OF EVIL IN THE WORLD?
CONGRESS
LBJ
VIET NAM
ZOOOOOOM!
The Courier-Journal

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Workers are making more money than ever—with after-tax income in the past 5 years up 33 per cent; in the last year alone, up 8 per cent.

More people are working than ever before in our history—an increase last year of 2½ million jobs.[13]

I was informed this afternoon by the distinguished Secretary of the Treasury that his preliminary estimates indicate that our balance of payments deficit has been reduced from $2.8 billion in 1964 to $1.3 billion, or less, in 1965. This achievement has been made possible by the patriotic voluntary cooperation of businessmen and bankers working with your Government.[14]

I believe it desirable, because of increased military expenditures, that you temporarily restore the automobile and certain telephone excise tax reductions made effective only 12 days ago.[15]

For that other nation within a Nation—the poor—whose distress has now captured the conscience of America,[16] I will ask the Congress not only to continue, but to speed up the war on poverty.[17] And in so doing, we will provide the added energy of achievement with the increased efficiency of experience.

And I also intend to ask the Congress to consider measures which, without improperly invading State and local authority, will enable us effectively to deal with strikes which threaten irreparable damage to the national interest.[18]

A great nation is one which breeds a great people. A great people flower not from wealth and power, but from a society which spurs them to the fullness of their genius. That alone is a Great Society.

Yet, slowly, painfully, on the edge of victory, has come the knowledge that shared prosperity is not enough. In the midst of abundance modern man walks oppressed by forces which menace and confine the quality of his life, and which individual abundance alone will not overcome.

We can subdue and we can master these forces—bringing increased meaning to our lives—if all of us, Government and citizens, are bold enough to change old ways, daring enough to assault new dangers, and if the dream is dear enough to call forth the limitless capacities of this great people.[19]

It is the genius of our Constitution that under its shelter of enduring institutions and rooted principles there is ample room for the rich fertility of American political invention.[20]

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[13]There is an interesting coincidence between this figure and the increase in total population during the same period, which may, perhaps, help to explain the improvement.

[14]These businessmen and bankers can be readily identified by the casts on their arms.

[15]"The shortest tax cut in history."—Dirksen, Everett.

[16]But who have captured very few places on the local poverty program committees.

[17]Under Johnson, America has become the most aggressive nation in the world history, simultaneously conducting wars against poverty, disease, ignorance, hunger, the Vietcong, suspected Vietcong, and some others who happen to be in the way of the gunfire. The President's skill at declaring wars is not matched by his skill in winning them.

[18]"Candor requires me to say that I am quite disturbed that essential services could be paralyzed for so long, and I am equally concerned by the cost of the settlement." — Johnson, L. B.; commenting on the settlement of the New York transit strike.

"We agree. But that bit of presidential 'candor' would have come with better grace and more effect a few days earlier. Soldiers who shun the battle make poor critics of the loss." — New York Herald Tribune.

"Wer hat Angst vor Willard Wirtz schon?" — Die Glockenspiegel.

[19]These three paragraphs were undoubtedly among those that led the distinguished critic Dirksen to remark that the speech was "pretty wordy." This is severe criticism, indeed, considering the source.

[20]"Amen." — Book of Common Prayer; passim.

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I propose to examine our Federal system — the relation between city, State, Nation, and the citizens themselves. We need a commission of the most distinguished scholars and men of public affairs to do this job. I will ask them to move on to develop a creative federalism to best use the wonderful diversity of our institutions and our people to solve the problems and to fulfill the dreams of the American people.[21]

Tonight Viet-Nam must hold the center of our attention, but across the world problems and opportunities crowd in on the American Nation. I will discuss them fully in the months to come, and I will follow the five continuing lines of policy that America has followed under its last four Presidents.

The first principle is strength.

Tonight I can tell you that we are strong enough to keep all of our commitments. We will need expenditures of $58.3 billion for the next fiscal year to maintain this necessary defense might.

While special Viet-Nam expenditures for the next fiscal year are estimated to increase by $5.8 billion, I can tell you that all the other expenditures put together, in the entire Federal budget will rise this coming year by only $.6 billion.[22]

A second principle of policy is the effort to control, and to reduce, and to ultimately eliminate the modern engines of destruction.

We will vigorously pursue existing proposals — and seek new ones — to control arms and to stop the spread of nuclear weapons.

A third major principle of our foreign policy is to help build those associations of nations which reflect the opportunities and the necessities of the modern world.

We will take new steps this year to help strengthen the Alliance for Progress, the unity of Europe, the community of the Atlantic, the regional organizations of developing continents, and that supreme association — the United Nations.[23]

We will work to strengthen economic cooperation, to reduce barriers to trade, and to improve international finance.

A fourth enduring strand of policy has been to help improve the life of man.

From the Marshall plan to this very moment tonight, that policy has rested on the claims of compassion, and the certain knowledge that only a people advancing in expectation will build secure and peaceful lands.

This year I propose major new directions in our program of foreign

---

[21]"Commissions take minutes and waste years." — Anonymous.

[22]Apparently, this six-tenths of a billion dollars will be spread equally among the numerous programs promised elsewhere in the address, including rebuilding "on a scale never before attempted entire central and slum areas;" "a maximum attack on hunger and disease and ignorance;" cleaning "completely entire large river basins;" revitalizing the entire Federal system of law enforcement; speeding up the war on poverty; building a supersonic transport plane, etc. Some scholars have suggested that the six-tenths of a billion dollars may get stretched rather thin. Indeed, Strange & Love have inquired: "Do we not see here an example of Johnson, master of parable and legend?" On the other hand, Mortlesby, in the Ft. Lauderdale Literary Review, points out that Strange & Love avoid completely the question of whether Johnson enters the vocabulary of mythology when he speaks of his promises, or when he speaks of his six-tenths of a billion dollars, or both. And Dr. Warren R. Lingelhopper, D. D. Eisenhower Professor of Mathematical Obfuscation at Dubuque, correctly observes in a private communication with this writer:

$$\$600{,}000{,}000\ (OxExO) + (NA(S)^{\alpha}) - \frac{B}{52} = (LB)^{i}$$

[23]The United Nations is an international peace keeping organization only recently discovered by the Johnson Administration.

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assistance to help those countries who will help themselves.

We will conduct a worldwide attack on the problems of hunger and disease and ignorance.

We will place the matchless skill and the resources of our own great America, in farming and in fertilizers,[24] at the service of those countries committed to develop a modern agriculture.

The fifth and most important principle of our foreign policy is support of national independence—the right of each people to govern themselves—and to shape their own institutions.[25]

We follow this principle, abroad as well as at home, by continued hostility to the rule of the many by the few—or the oppression of one race by another.[26]

The insistent urge toward national independence is the strongest force of today's world in which we live.

In Africa and Asia and Latin America it is shattering the designs of those who would subdue others to their ideas or their will.

It is eroding the unity of what was once a Stalinist empire.

In recent months a number of nations have cast out those who would subject them to the ambitions of mainland China.[27]

History is on the side of freedom and is on the side of societies shaped from the genius of each people. History does not favor a single system or belief—unless force is used to make it so.

Not too many years ago Viet-Nam was a peaceful, if troubled, land.[28] In the North was an independent Communist government. In the South a people struggled to build a Nation, with the friendly help of the United States.[29]

There were some in South Viet-Nam who wished to force Communist rule on their own people. But their progress was slight. Their hope of success was dim. Then, little more than 6 years ago, North Viet-Nam decided on conquest. And from that day to this, soldiers and supplies have moved from North to South in a swelling stream that swallowed the remnants of revolution in aggression.[30]

As the assault mounted, our choice gradually became clear. We could leave, abandon South Viet-Nam to its attackers and to certain conquest, or we could stay and fight beside the people of South Viet-Nam.

We stayed.[31]

And we will stay until aggression has stopped.

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[24]**Fertilizers** is apparently used here in its literal sense.
[25]Cf. America's activities in the Dominican Republic.
[26]Exemplified by the United States' well known hostility towards such countries as Spain, Union of South Africa, and Paraguay.
[27]Including Indonesia, one of the Southeast Asian 'dominoes' that fell and then picked itself up with remarkably little assistance from the U. S.
[28]The original text is believed to have begun with the phrase: "Once upon a time." This was later deleted in order to lend a less Grimm-like quality to the passage.
[29]It is not clear where Johnson got this interpretation of history. The Geneva agreements of 1954 speak of the two parts of Vietnam as "regrouping zones" on either side of a "provisional military demarcation line." This implies something less than two independent nations. Further, the agreements note: "The military demarcation line at the 17th parllel is provisional and should not in any way be considered as constituting a political or territorial boundary." The two nation concept, however, is valuable since it more facilely rationalizes current Administration policy. And deFault (op. cit.) makes the illuminating comment: "Johnson n'est pas Thucydides, n'est-ce pas?"
[30]The difference between the "remnants of revolution" and "aggression" is crucial to comprehension of the Johnsonian thesis, and the student should attempt to understand it no matter how difficult the task. This writer is still trying.
[31]**Stay** as used in these paragraphs should probably be translated **go**, since at the time Johnson is speaking of, there weren't more than a few hundred Americans in Vietnam. Today, American troops are staying in Vietnam in ever increasing numbers. Some sources estimate the number staying in Vietnam will eventually reach 500,000.

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We will stay because a just nation cannot leave to the cruelties of its enemies a people who have staked their lives and independence on America's solemn pledge — a pledge which has grown through the commitments of three American Presidents.[32]

We will stay because in Asia and around the world are countries whose independence rests, in large measure, on confidence in America's word and in America's protection. To yield to force in Viet-Nam would weaken that confidence, would undermine the independence of many lands, and would whet the appetite of aggression. We would have to fight in one land, and then we would have to fight in another—or abandon much of Asia to the domination of Communists.[33]

The enemy is no longer close to victory.[34] Time is no longer on his side. There is no cause to doubt the American commitment.

Our decision to stand firm has been matched by our desire for peace.

In 1965 alone we had 300 private talks for peace in Viet-Nam, with friends and adversaries throughout the world.[35]

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[32]The identity of the three American presidents remains wrapped in mystery. Eisenhower is not one of them. During his term of office there were only 600 American officers and men stationed in Vietnam and these were not engaged in combat. Nor has any commitment by Eisenhower to defend the independence of South Vietnam ever been discovered.

Neither was Kennedy one of the presidents. A few months before his death he described Vietnam this way: "I don't think that unless a greater effort is made by the government to win popular support that the war can be won there. In the final analysis, it is their war. They are the ones who have to win it or lose it. We can give them equipment, we can send men out there as advisors, but they have to win it — the people of Vietnam — against the Communists. We are prepared to continue to assist them, but I don't think that the war can be won unless the people support the effort, and, in my opinion, in the last two months the government has gotten out of touch with the people."

There is even some question as to whether Johnson is one of the Presidents mentioned. For on August 12, 1964, Johnson stated: "Some others are eager to enlarge the conflict. They call upon us to supply American boys to do the job that Asian boys should do. They ask us to take reckless action which might risk the lives of millions, and engulf much of Asia nd certainly threaten the peace of the entire world." And on August 29, 1964, "I get a lot of advice lately . . . . bad advice from some generals [who would have the U. S.] drop bombs on places I think would result in enlarging the war, . . . committing boys to fight a war that should be fought by boys of Asia to protect their own land. . . . I think it is better to lose 200 [men] . . . than to lose 200,000."

There has been some speculation that Johnson was referring to Presidents Harding, Coolidge and Hoover, but there is little evidence to support this contention. More likely the key word in this passage is "grown." Indeed, our commitment has grown. Cf. Topsy in Uncle Tom's Cabin; Stowe, Harriet, Beecher; 1852; Chapter 20: "I 'spect I grow'd. Don't think anybody ever made me."

[33]"I feel that the boys who go to Vietnam are big boys and should feel fortunate that they were picked to go. Uncle Sam doesn't pick just anyone, only those he thinks would do the best for our country. If I were chosen, I would be proud to go so I could save the lives of my loved ones. If we were to leave Vietnam, it may be a matter of days or even hours before the Communists would invade our beautiful country." — Letter in teenage column of Washington Evening Star.

[34]Cf. "We have stopped losing the war." — McNamara, Robert. The style is similar, characterized by a proclamation of the end of a situation, the existence of which had not previously been admitted.

[35]That averages out to around one per day (excluding Sundays), which does not seem excessive for a State Department employing 25,000 persons.

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We seek neither territory nor bases, economic domination or military alliance in Viet-Nam. We fight for the principle of self-determination—that the people of South Viet-Nam should be able to choose their own course, choose it in free elections without violence, without terror, and without fear.

The people of all Viet-Nam should make a free decision on the great question of reunification.[36]

This is all we want for South Viet-Nam. It is all the people of South Viet-Nam want. And if there is a single nation on this earth that desires less than this for its own people, then let its voice be heard.

We have also made it clear—from Hanoi to New York—that there are no arbitrary limits to our search for peace.[37] We stand by the Geneva Agreements of 1954 and 1962.[38] We will meet at any conference table, we will discuss any proposals — four points or fourteen or forty—and we will consider the views of any group.

Until peace comes, or if it does not come, our course is clear. We will act as we must to help protect the independence of the valiant people of South Viet-Nam. We will strive to limit the conflict, for we wish neither increased destruction nor do we want to invite increased danger.

But we will give our fighting men what they must have: every gun, and every dollar, and every decision — whatever the cost or whatever the challenge.[39]

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[36]Implicit in this statement is the realization that the reunification question will have to be delayed until we can teach the Vietnamese enough about democracy so that they can make the right choice. Right now there is the danger that a majority of Vietnamese might wish to reunify under Ho Chi Minh. This would be another clear example of aggression and could not be tolerated.

[37]"Saigon, Jan. 16 (Sunday)—The United States and South Vietnam pledged today to continue the war."—Washington Post, four days after the State of the Union address.

[38]Just which Geneva agreements we are standing by is not clear; certainly not the ones of 1954 most popularly alluded to, for these include such requirements as these:

"No person, military or civilian, shall be permitted to cross the provisional military demarcation line unless specifically authorized to do so by the Joint Commission."—Article 6.

"The introduction into Vietnam of any troop reinforcements and additional military personnel is prohibited."—Article 16

"The introduction into Vietnam of any reinforcements in the form of all types of arms, munitions and other war material, such as combat aircraft, naval craft, pieces of ordnance, jet engines and jet weapons, and armored vehicles is prohibited." —Article 17

"The establishment of new military bases is prohibited throughout Vietnam territory."—Article 18

"No military base under the control of a foreign state may be established in the regrouping zone of either party; the two parties shall ensure that the zones assigned to them do not adhere to any military alliances and are not used for the resumption of hostilities or to further an aggressive policy."—Article 19.

[39]"We do not want to fight, yet by Jingo! if we do, we've got the ships, we've got the men, and got the money too!" — 19th century English music hall song, origin of the phrase "jingoism."

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This is the State of the Union.

But over it all—wealth, and promise, and expectation—lies our troubling awareness of American men at war tonight.

How many men who listen to me tonight have served their Nation in other wars? How very many are not here to listen?

The war in Viet-Nam is not like these other wars. Yet, finally, war is always the same. It is young men dying in the fullness of their promise. It is trying to kill a man that you do not even know well enough to hate.[40]

Therefore, to know war is to know that there is still madness in this world.

Many of you share the burden of this knowledge tonight with me. But there is a difference. For finally I must be the one to order our guns to fire, against all the most inward pulls of my desire. For we have children to teach, and we have sick to be cured, and we have men to be freed. There are poor to be lifted up, and there are cities to be built, and there is a world to be helped.

Yet we do what we must.[41]

The work must be our work now. Scarred by the weaknesses of man, with whatever guidance God may offer us, we must nevertheless and alone with our mortality, strive to ennoble the life of man on earth.[42]

Thank you, and goodnight.

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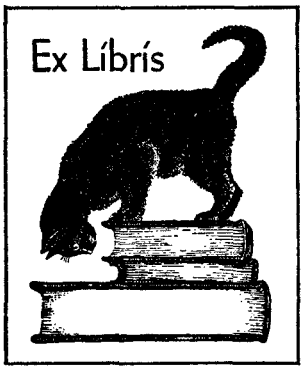

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[40]"No war ought ever to be undertaken but under circumstances which render all intercourse of courtesy between the combatants impossible. It is a bad thing that men should hate each other; but it is far worse that they should contract the habit of cutting one another's throats without hatred." — Macaulay, T. B.; Milford's History of Greece, 1824.

[41]"Suppose you go to war, you cannot fight always; and when, after much loss on both sides, and no gain on either, you cease fighting, the identical old questions as to terms of intercourse are again upon you." — Lincoln, Abraham; 1861.

[42]"We shall meet the enemy and not only shall it be ours, it may be us." — Kelly, Walter; mid-20th century American philosopher and cartoonist.

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Letter from Lorelei

FEDERALSBURG, MD.

DEAR SAM,

THIS IS A TALE of woe. I could easily qualify for a part in *Outer Limits*. I am one big mess. I can't even wear my glasses to write this because my nose is swollen and skinned and I look like I have been boozing for a month. Thursday, I had just received your note and THE IDLER; then my spinster friend came and we went shopping in Denton. Meant to go Friday but the weatherman said snow, so we went Thursday. At the *Record* office I was my gay and kidding old self and went out in a blaze of aging youthfulness; started to cross the street, my toe caught on a piece of broken cement and down I went, flat on me old mug. Two kids picked me up and I was bleeding, etc., etc. I was carted to the Doc who patched me up, took X-rays, said I would look a mess, otherwise I was all in one piece and this was a miracle. I hit the pavement awfully hard and could have had a cracked skull—but I only have a broken cartilage in the nose and two big mice. What a a couple of shiners. Then I went to the library, got 12 books, went to the A&P and got cat food and stuff, then came home. Before night I could see out of one eye and spent the night with ice cubes on my face. Now I can use both eyes, but my glasses don't fit on my nose. I am going to feed my chickens, have another cup of coffee and settle down to read and think how lucky I have been. I might have landed in the hospital. I made the handsome doc sore when I told him if I had a concussion I wanted a cable sent to the Congo for a witch doctor. They are cheaper than our doctors. I have loads of old beads and earrings.

My TV is on the blink. Sunday night it went whoosh — and black. I had my radio until those two absolutely devilish young cats started taking the place apart — and knocked the radio down. But I have had to live alone for 22 years and learned to do things my husband wouldn't let me even think about. I got the radio going after a while with a clothes pin.

It's snowing right now and of course there is already hysteria setting in. To these sissies on the eastern seaboard, one inch of snow is a disaster.

You should see this awful house. The room I sit in was built 150 years ago or more and is all crooked. It was put together with pegs. The beams are handhewn. The chimney is so narrow and crooked and the walls so rough I always have to do the papering myself. I have plastered my chimney with beautiful pictures of the Alps, the Materhorn, the Jungfrau, etc. Up in the rolling Jura Mountains, in St. Croix, I learned to ski on barrel staves and we didn't see the bare ground from November 'til April.

Readers will recall having seen a couple of pieces by Lorelei in previous issues. In the course of publishing these articles, I received numerous delightful letters from Lorelei. I've asked her to keep writing letters so they could be shared with readers of THE IDLER.

Lorelei was born in Geneva, Switzerland, October 30, 1890. She has lived in many places in Europe including a stay in Vienna from 1908 to 1913.

Today she lives alone in Federalsburg, Md., with numerous cats (including her favorite: Oliver Wendell Holmes) where she keeps a careful and caustic eye on the world via newspapers, books, radio and TV. She writes a weekly column for THE COUNTY RECORD. *I could tell you more but I'll leave that to her in this and future issues.—Ed.*

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THE EASTERN SHORE is about the ugliest bit of no place I have ever seen. They bulldoze all the woods and let the mess lay all around everywhere. There isn't a farmer who appreciates even a tree or a bird or anything. They are worshippers of the land only because of the money they can squeeze out of it. They don't read the papers, they don't listen to the news, half my acquaintances have no idea of where exactly Vietnam is. But they all have dishwashers and a new car every year.

Well, poor me ain't got no car, but I just got to the library yesterday with some nice old maid who likes to drag me about and I got *Brave New World*, which I had never read before. Fascinating. I'd like to come back and live among that bunch.

I NEVER MIND being alone as long as the wheels in my head keep turning. Like a windmill they simply have to have a breeze. I have to hear voices, see people at least on a screen. I don't miss a newscast, radio or TV. I see all the specials and listen to all interviews I can. I can immediately find out the contradictions and evasions in the news . . . the snafus about Vietnam. I listen to Humphrey talk again of a "just and lasting peace." It makes me sneeze.

IT'S COLD AND I love the cold, but it also is windy and that I don't like. In this old house the wind simply swishes through — and I can't even close my front door because everything is warped, so no matter how I try to stuff cracks, etc., I have to shiver. I hate sleeping in a warm room, but going upstairs is like going to Antarctica — and at such times even the cats desert me. So, I stay down here and sleep with two cats on my feet and Oliver curled up under my chin. He weighs at least 8 pounds. Hell of a life that is.

Now if you had a space suit and could zip over here, I would give you a dozen right fresh eggs — four of them just laid today — and a bottle of my own home-made wild cherry wine. I have loads of stuff to eat. I make my own bread once a week just because I like doing it and I am eating all that Christmas candy and stuff to get rid of it. Then I'll try to lose 30 pounds — it's a losing battle and anyhow, even if LBJ won't admit it, we have inflation — and there will come the times when we will have to live off our own fats and the cats will have to eat mice and birds instead of Friskies. So I refuse to worry.

IF YOU LIKE MY story of Empress Elizabeth, let me rewrite it and fix it up. Maybe it's too sentimental. I could make it a little more sophisticated, but if you will do it yourself, go ahead. Only don't make some of those cockeyed statements Americans like to make about European royalty. Make it nice and maybe we'll get ourselves a new lot of subscribers and readers, just because I am the light side of your hodgepodge, something to make you or them forget LBJ and his cohorts. OK?

Best regards,

Lorelei

P.S. Say, isn't that a joke, the way our bigwigs are scurrying around like a bunch of frightened rats, trying to enlist everyone of the people they formerly told to mind their own business because Vietnam was *our* affair?

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Excursions

Home is where the art is

By A. H. Berzen

WHENEVER SOMEONE starts name dropping, I like to tell about the time the late Aldous Huxley was a guest in my house. Of course, I quickly add, he was unaware of it, since it happened while I was living in Washington's Corcoran Gallery of Art.

And that came about this way: Some years ago, I went down to Washington from New York to do some research in the Library of Congress. I arrived in the evening, checked into a hotel, and after a shower and change of clothes, went out for dinner. I no sooner entered the restaurant when I heard my name, and turned to see a couple I will call Tom and Alice Wilson.

When I'd last seen Tom, several years before, he'd been associated with a prominent foundation, doing studies on the history of art. His work had taken him and his wife abroad numerous times on one scholarly pursuit or another, and I remembered him as one of those select people forever receiving grants for study.

When they heard I planned to stay in town a week, they looked at each other and both began talking at once.

"Why don't you stay at our place? We've got —."

"A week off and we'd love to get away, but there's Basil, our cat. He doesn't like boarding at the vet's."

"But he hasn't yet learned how to open canned food. We've a very comfortable place and —."

"You'd be free to come and go as you please."

"Why not take the cat with you?" I asked.

"Basil is a poor traveller," Tom said.

"We've tried to get someone," Alice said, "But had no luck."

Their pleading bothered me and I felt that if I put any conditions on accepting their invitation I'd sound rude. Besides, they offered an apartment; all I had to do was take care of a cat.

"Okay."

"Fine," Tom said. "Let's check you out of your hotel."

I got my bag, paid my bill, and we drove to their place. As we approached the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Seventeenth Street — where stands the grey-black pillared wedding cake of a building — Tom headed south, and in a few moments pulled up into the driveway on E Street, beneath the Corcoran.

I was startled at his choice of a parking place but, coming from New York, was aware of the lengths to which people would go to park a car.

We got out, but when they started walking toward where there couldn't possibly be any kind of residence, I began to feel uneasy. As we reached the corner, Tom stopped at a doorway and opened with a key what was plainly a side entrance to the Gallery.

I held back.

"This is it," he said, "Your home for the next week."

"You didn't say you lived *here*."

"I did, but you probably weren't listening."

He clicked on the entrance hall light and from around the foyer appeared a calico cat, to whom I was promptly introduced.

While Alice left to pack their things for an early morning departure, Tom showed me through the apartment. There were about a half dozen huge high-ceilinged rooms, with a full kitchen and large dining area.

Tom told me — and this time I listened — that he worked for the Gallery, and use of the apartment was considered part of his remuneration. His office was upstairs. The room I'd use was easily twice the size of my two-room apartment in New York.

Living there, I thought, would be a simple matter, but whoever I told

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about it, that week, required a full explanation about the Wilsons and the reason I was staying there.

One evening, a cab driver studied me in his windshield mirror as we neared the place.

"Sure you want out here, mister?"

"At the corner please."

"But this is an art museum."

"I know."

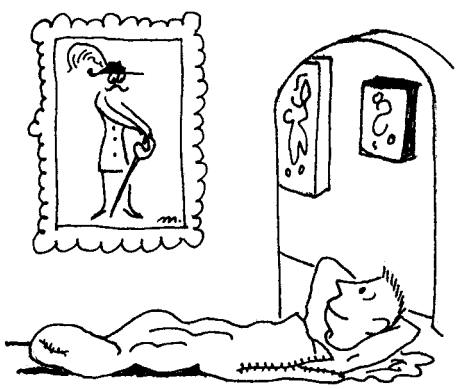
The cab slowed and stopped.

"Here?"

"Yes."

He watched me get out and waited while I walked to the door and opened it with my key.

Then he called out, "Man, what a place for a ball."



I turned and shouted back, "Not much, really, but it's home."

The night before the Wilsons returned I decided to use the kitchen at least once — I hadn't before, though Basil took his meals there — and brewed some tea. But then I found they were out of sugar. I'd had a good week, accomplishing all I'd set out to do, and thought for a moment of running over to my nearest neighbor and borrowing a cup. Said neighbor, of course, being the White House.

I relaxed with the evening newspaper and was held by a small item that told of an event scheduled for that evening. I read on. A local cultural group was running a series of lectures and using the Gallery's auditorium. People prominent in art, literature, and music were the invited speakers.

I looked at my watch. Yes, I could easily make it for I hadn't far to go. And while I wasn't a member of those sponsoring Mr. Huxley, that evening's speaker, I felt sure he wouldn't mind if I went upstairs to listen. Because, in a way, he was sort of in my house.

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CREDITS

The character sketches are drawn by John Perts, of Suffolk, Va.

Bob and Susie Sanderson, of Bristol, R. I., helped — as usual — with the production of this issue.

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. . . I am reminded of a quotation from Frank Lloyd Wright, who was, of course, not referring to the current Asian situation:

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That Wright always did have a pithy comment on the tip of his tongue.

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HOLD ON!

By Charles McDowell, Jr.

A DEDICATED MAN OF science, after years of observation, let it be known to the press the other day that dogs, cats, parakeets and other household pets tended to become nervous and irritable if they watched too much television.

Although we were hardly bowled over by astonishment at this finding when we saw it on a news wire, we remembered it and repeated it to the lady of the house when we got home in the evening. (A man can't always come home to supper full of new visions of the Great Society and the old jokes of Senator Dirksen. He owes it to his family to vary his reports from the exciting outside world.)

When we told the lady of the house about the scientific revelation of the troubling effect of television on domestic animals, she said, "Wowzie!"

She has been reading Tom Wolfe — the contemporary Tom Wolfe — and is given to pungent exclamations like that.

Actually, of course, her tone was heavily laden with irony. As it happens, we have been aware for many years at our house that television can have a profound influence on the conduct and mental stability of animals.

More than a decade ago, we lived in a small city apartment with a gray cat. Whenever the television set was turned on, the cat would put up with it for about 10 minutes. Then the cat's ears and tail would begin to twitch.

At first we thought it was just Milton Berle and John Cameron Swayze, but we learned that even the Kraft Theater affected the cat the same way.

Soon after the twitching began, the cat would get up, go to the desk and pick up a paper clip, which it would carry in its teeth through the apartment to the bathroom. There the cat would slide the paper clip down the rear incline of the bathtub, chase it, bat it around for a while and, ultimately, knock it down the drain.

We have seen that cat dispose of two dozen paper clips in an evening when the television was on. The plumber, for one, never believed it, but this behavior continued as long as the cat lived in the apartment with the television. When we moved to another apartment without a bathtub, only a shower stall with a well-screened drain, the cat had a complete nervous breakdown and had to be retired to the country.

It was either the cat or the television, and we thought we ought to have television for the children, who were beginning to be a factor about that time.

Some years later we saw a news item that confirmed our own observations on the effect of television on animals. John Chancellor had succeeded Dave Garroway on the good old Today show, and a dairy farmer reported that since the transition his cows were giving 5 to 7 per cent less milk.

The farmer and his cows, watching the program together in the barn at morning milking time, reached a persuasive scientific conclusion far ahead of this latest scientist.

In subsequent years, our own experience has given us no reason to doubt that television troubles animals.

We live in a house with three children, a large dog, an orange cat and a small bad-tempered turtle. The children usually can take care of themselves where television is concerned; their boredom threshhold is low.

Our problem is to protect the animals, particularly the cat and the turtle, from too much exposure. After an hour or so of television, the cat be-

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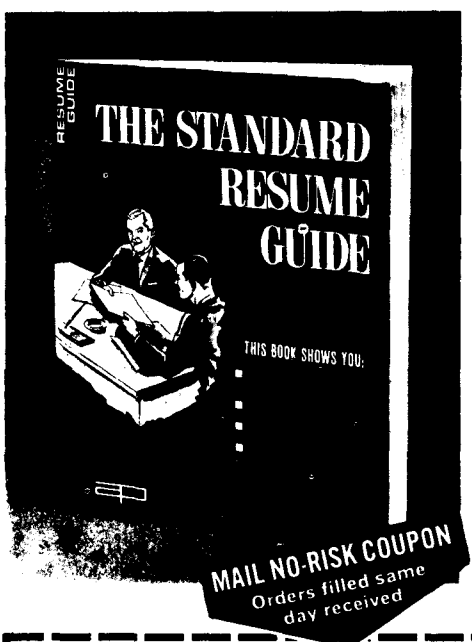

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2. We also sell space in the conventional manner. Our rates: $35 a page; $22 a half-page; $3 a column inch. No time or frequency discounts.
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comes petulant and snappish and a hazard to its keepers. After a couple of hours, the cat becomes an aggressive hazard to the turtle.

The turtle reacts to almost any television program by swimming insanely again and again, head first, into its rock. After a time, the turtle tries to climb out of its container and get at the cat.

The dog has been different. It sleeps through anything except, of all things, political speakers. We watch a lot of news and public affairs at our house, and the dog has to contend with a lot of political speakers.

Until recently, it yawned at some, whined at some, and made low growling noises at others. It was an interesting commentary. But recently the dog has begun growling at all of them. It worries us, frankly, to see the dog falling into the jaded, cynical ways of Washington.

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Plowing Out

By Uncle Abner

SALTLICKHAM

I EXPECT, MR. EDITOR, that when you wrote me about the great Washington blizzard of '66 with its 16 inches of snow and no plow in sight on your street 'til four days after the storm, that you thought I'd come back and tell how 16 inches ain't much and why did it take so long to get cleaned up. And up 'til 'bout two weeks ago I might have had a mind to do just that. You know: remind you of the winter of '07 when we had our first snowfall the 8th of October and come the 1st of May we were still on runners. But I ain't going to do it. Not after what happened last night. 'Cause we got some U.S.D.A. Inspected Prime proof that it don't pay to get uppity 'bout such things.

The trouble started the night of the Legion's "Back the Attack in Vietnam" party. Some affair that was, too. If the Vietcong had seen how much support our boys had in just one small town alone, they'd have headed out of those jungles faster than a poacher being escalated by buckshot.

Course, I got to admit that the enthusiasm weren't all caused by political considerations. Natalie Pinchkott's Pleiku punch helped a trifle. For example, some of the strongest arguments for bombing Hanoi were given by Roger Oafer. Roger announced early in the evening that he was going to down a glass of punch for every mission he flew in World War II. Judging from the number of glasses he drank, I figured he must have gotten involved in the war a few years before the rest of us, or else kept at it a fair while longer.

Anyway, long 'bout ten-thirty or so, it started snowing. By midnight, the town manager had stopped talking 'bout defoliation long enough to order out the town snowplow.

This was easier ordered than done. For the man who drives the town snowplow is Roger Oafer, who had by this time become so forceful in his arguments for bombing Hanoi that everyone figured he might be a little bombed himself. So the town manager asked for volunteers. Several of the younger members present could be seen slipping out the back door, apparently having the impression that he meant volunteers for Vietnam.

As for those who did offer to drive the plow, all were quickly disqualified by a special emergency committee set up for the purpose, consisting of Matt Mudgette, our chief of police. Finally, Matt decided the best thing to do would be to call his deputy, Merton Fudge, who was on duty down to the station. This he did and then we all got back to negotiating over Pleiku punch.

When it came up to one a.m. in the morning or thereabouts, I decided I'd better go home. I figured that Elizabeth might set to worrying 'bout me. So I cleaned off the windshield of my '49 DeSoto, jabbed the starter, and whirrbramm — off she went just like she weren't getting on 17 years old.

As I were going down Elm Street, which is 'bout wide enough for two cars and a thin bicycle, I see two headlights coming my way. But that's not all I see. Behind those two headlights I see the town snowplow, its yellow light flashing, coming along at a good clip, and pushing the snow not onto the side walk but right into the lane I'm driving in. I stop and roll down the window to holler at Merton what he's doing wrong. That were a mistake. 'Cause Merton keeps right on coming, shovels a pile of snow all around my car and has enough to build a two story igloo left over which he pushes right into the front with me.

Soon as I shovel myself out of the car and get my temper a mite under control, I said to Merton, "Merton, you goddamned fool, what you plow-

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ing snow on the wrong side of the street for?"

"Gosh, Abner," he said "Damned if I know. I've been driving up and down Elm Street for close onto two hours now, and soon as I get one side clear the other gets filled up."

Well, Merton's not the kind of guy you can stay mad at long. So, careful as I could, I explain to him how he should be plowing the snow out to starboard instead of to port. He said he thought that might be the case but couldn't find any way of changing the angle on the plow. So I got in the cab of the truck to see if I could help him. Between the Pleiku punch, the darkness and I think I better get a new prescription for my glasses, I couldn't find a lever in there if it'd had a hundred watt bulb attached to it.

"Tell you what you do," I finally told Merton. "You drive the truck up the left hand side of the street. That way the snow will come out on the sidewalk."

"Be against the law, wouldn't it?" he wanted to know.

"Suppose so," I told him, "But seeing how you're the law around town tonight I wouldn't let it worry you too much."

He thought 'bout that for awhile and finally he came to the conclusion that it was probably right. I started back to the car. I were halfway there when he calls out: "Abner, I found the lever."

Well, that weren't quite right. He hadn't found *the* lever. He'd found *a* lever. Next thing either of us knows, the dump body of the truck lifts up and we got the nicest two ton pile of rock salt sitting in the middle of Elm Street you ever want to see.

"You're going to need help," I said.

Merton 'lowed as how that were probably true. So I went to fetch it. Then I went home.

Elizabeth was waiting for me. "Snowing out," I said.

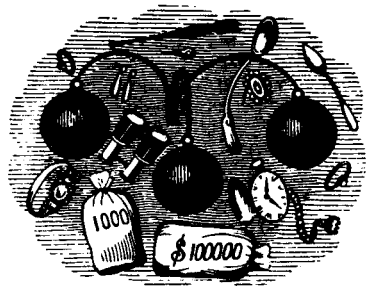
"Eyah," she said. She made me a cup of Irish Sanka, then she said, "You read 'bout that storm down to Washington really tied things up?"

"Eyah," I said.

"Wonder why folks down there can't take care of a little snow?" she asked.

"I'll tell you tomorrow." Then we went to bed.

OPPORTUNITIES



Back issues of THE IDLER, when available, at these rates: single copies: 35c; three or more: 25c each; ten or more: 20c each. Idler 125 Fifth St. NE, Washington 2, D.C.

SOCIETY FOR HUMANE ABORTION For information send stamped self-addressed envelope to Box 1862, San Francisco, California 94101

Crown (electric eye) 8mm Auto zoom camera. 1.8 lens. With pistol grip and carrying case. List price $174.50. While they last: $100 each post paid. Erler Camera, Box I, 1540 E. 83rd St., Chicago, Ill. 60619.

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The Idler is available in an air mail edition printed on light-weight paper at the following rates:

United States: $5.00 per year.

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Current subscribers wishing to change to the air mail edition for the remaining issues of their subscription are invited to write us for rate information.

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Flotsam & Jetsam

☞A SOCIETY PAGE WRITER in New York state writes us to take exception with a few of our remarks on her profession. She says her paper prints every picture of a Negro bride it gets, "perhaps one every six to eight weeks." One Negro told her that Negroes who want their pictures in the newspaper are "Uncle Toms or social climbers" and that most of his friends feel that they would "be associated with Whitey if they were pictured with him." The society writer goes on: "At any rate, it's *not* an act of discrimination; when they come in, they're printed, generally in a better spot than a girl with equal education or background but a whiter face."

And she adds:

"My one personal discrimination is against brides who either cannot spell their fiance's name or cannot spell peau de soie. I've found six brides who spelled it correctly. They received prominent coverage!"

☞YOU HAVE PROBABLY never heard of the Inter-American Cultural and Trade Center, but you should, since Congress has decided to spend more than nine million dollars on it. The idea for Interama, as it's called for short, has been kicking around for years, especially in the minds of some Florida politicians and promoters. The trade center is going to be set up in swampland north of Miami Beach, and — if we are to believe its boosters — will do more for Latin Americans than the Alliance for Progress and more for Florida than the war on poverty. We gather, from the discussions of the matter in the Senate recently, that it will end Miami's unemployment problem, boom trade between the U.S. and the Americas, and — to quote a Miami radio station editorial — "demonstrate to the Americas what has been achieved without sacrifice of individual freedom and liberty within the framework of democratic institutions." While this was never stated, it is also possible that Interama may help to overthrow Fidel Castro.

All for nine million dollars plus. Well, Senator Frank Lausche didn't see it that way. What he did see was a massive lobbying effort (Interama's lobbyists have earned $5,000 so far) for Federal donation to a state trade fair. He waged a staunch but futile battle against federal participation in the project "Lobbyists have infested the halls," Lausche noted. "Bankers, lawyers, friends — they've all asked me to lay off. But I am compelled by my judgement and my good conscience to oppose this project." We're glad he did, but sorry he didn't succeed.

☞HERE ARE TWO statistics worth pondering. The President has put the cost of the Vietnamese war in fiscal 1967 at $10.3 billion. Our non-military aid to Vietnam will amount to $550 million. If our office slide rule hasn't gotten out of calibration we figure that out as about 19 times as much money to eliminate the Vietnamese as to help them.

☞DON'T KNOW WHETHER the following has anything to do with the above, but we were interested in the following item in the *Washington Star*:

"Citing a letter from the White House, the National Better Business Bureau has put out a warning to businessmen to quit trying to cash in on the Presidents name, family or picture.

"There was one food company for instance, that apparently thought the President's Texas appetite for barbecue ribs ought to make barbecue sauce sell like hot cakes. It brought out a LBJ brand.

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ART'S GALLERY

by Art Finley

"Repairman" hell! Our TV's UPSTAIRS!

"Then there was an exterminating company that must have seen some quality in the President that it thought helpful to its trade . . . It began to display a trade mark consisting of the word 'Exterminator' and a Western-style hat with the initials LBJ inside."

☞A FRIEND OF OURS, chortling over catching us with our predictions down, sent us a clipping that told how Federal Judge (and former Mississippi governor) J. P. Coleman had criticized the state of Louisiana for failing to offer proof that it is not systematically excluding Negroes from juries.

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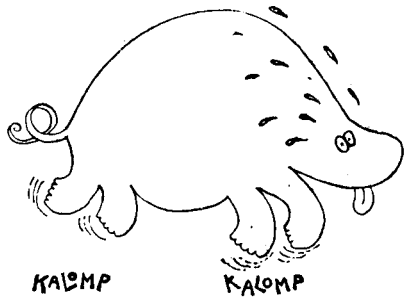
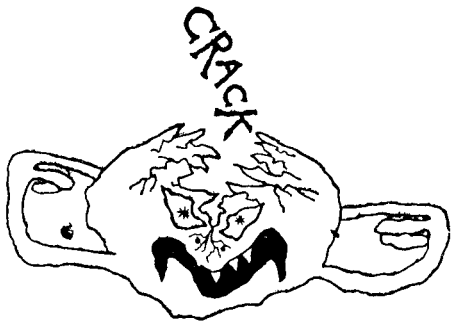
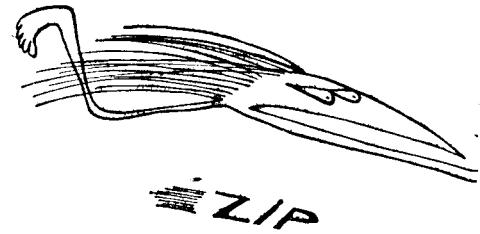
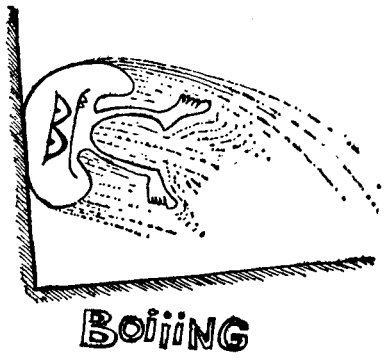
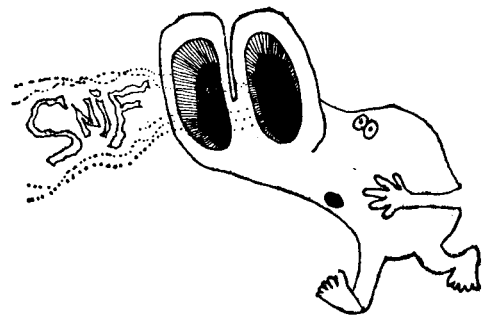
FQM: Elementary Phonetics for Comic Strip Readers











For the enlightenment of culturally and scientifically oriented readers, we present a series of photos taken through an electron microscope. The most commonly occuring sound particles are shown at a magnification of 100,000.
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We had said some unfavorable things about the President's choice of Coleman as a judge, but have to admit that we were pleasantly surprised by the item. We would be even more pleased to see Judge Coleman become the best damn judge in the country. But we still wonder whether it is a wise idea to appoint or elect men to public posts on the assumption that they are going to change 180 degrees once they get the job. Judge Coleman may be an exception, but, on the whole, the percentages seem to be against things working that way.

☞THE TELEPHONE BOOK of the Department of Commerce incorrectly spelled the name of the department's secretary, John Connor.

☞A SENATE INVESTIGATION is now in progress into the government's sale of oil and gas rights in Kentucky to private firms for $24.5 million. There are reports that the value of the deposit may run as high as $300 million. Those purchasing tracts were the Eastdil Corporation, Texaco, Allied Chemical and a combination of Sun Oil and Texas Gas Exploration.

☞DON MACLEAN, A COLUMNIST for the *Washington Daily News*, showed considerably ingenuity during Washington's recent blizzard. He had to get to work; his car didn't have snow tires; and the cabs were running with delays of an hour or more. So he called up a liquor store, had them deliver a fifth to his house, then rode downtown with the deliveryman. Getting home was just as simple. He telephoned Chik-N-Bucket, located near his house, ordered two chicken dinners and had them delivered to the *News*. Then he rode home with the deliveryman.

OPPORTUNITIES

John Lindsay is the new power in the GOP. What does he think about foreign aid? You'll find it in Idler #10. 35c. Idler, 125 Fifth St. NE, Washington 2, D.C.

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A Love Affair With the Piano! Master lessons, through correspondence. 33 years experience. Beginners. Rusty intermediates. Dusty advanced. Age no barrier. Cameo Studio Dept. 9, 25 Cameo Rd., Levittown, Pa. 19057

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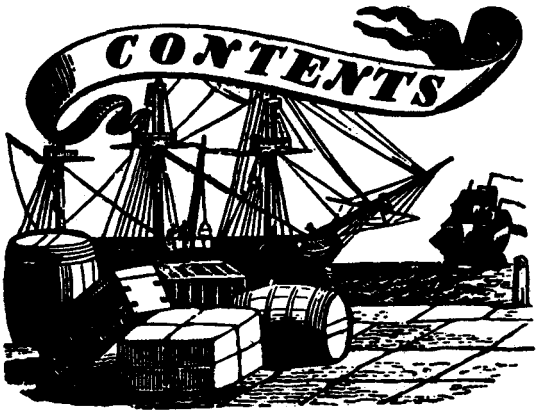

MOTION WITHOUT PROGRESS ..... Page 1

THE DAY THE BUSES RAN EMPTY ..... Page 3

THE STATE OF THE UNION ANNOTATED ..... Page 8

LETTER FROM LORELEI ..... Page 18

A. H. BERZEN: HOME IS WHERE THE ART IS ..... Page 20

CHARLES MCDOWELL ON PETS AND TV ..... Page 22

UNCLE ABNER ON PLOWING OUT ..... Page 26

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